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Gen. Crowder in Cuba.
Gen. Crowder's mission to Cuba is delicate and difficult. The situation in the island, both political and financial, is ticklish. The Cubans take their politics rather heatedly. They have recently held a presidential election, and a squabble has resulted. The two parties are at loggerheads, each accusing the other of skulduggery in the campaigning and at the polls. The business world, which includes the planting world, is much disturbed. The price of sugar, the island's great staple, has fallen to a figure which causes loud complaint. Rum is starting many persons in the face.

Here are ingredients of serious trouble. Resolutions have grown out of less.

We have no desire to intervene, and the majority of the Cubans do not want us to intervene. But our duty under the Platt amendment is clear. If Cuba falls into disorder, or shows unmistakable signs of doing so, we must step in and take charge. There will be nothing else to such a condition of affairs.

As The Star stated the other day, it will be easier for us to go in than to get out. And if we go in we shall want to get out. It will not be to our interests to stay longer than to untangle the tangle, and start the threads to running smoothly again. We have our hands full at home.

So let us hope that Gen. Crowder succeeds. He is the very man for the mission. He has been to Cuba before in an advisory capacity, and knows the people and "the lay of the land."

The Two Parties and Economy.
Gov. Miller's first message to the New York legislature is in the key of economy. He wants taxes reduced, and all unnecessary places under the state government abolished.

Both parties endorse his sentiments and pledge him support. The leaders of his own party in the legislature applaud him generously. The democratic leader in the Senate and the democratic leader in the assembly unite in this statement: "Gov. Miller's proposals for economy will have the warmest support of the democratic party in the legislature. His first message is commendable."

This spirit is spreading. There has been so much waste, and places have been so greatly multiplied, the drain upon the public wallet everywhere has been unprecedented.

The question is above party, as both parties are confessing; and as both parties are talking in the same key and moving to the same end, healthy conditions should, with no great difficulty, be re-established.

But not all at once. Time is an element. The people must be patient. We have strayed a considerable way from the middle of the road—further than was intended, or than was noted while we were off the move. The period was one of extreme excitement.

Now that the excitement is subsiding, and people are getting steady "peepers" on the situation, there is no reason why, the two parties co-operating, there should not be a return to normal, with waste cut out and taxes receding.

New York theater ticket speculators are now accused of irregularity with reference to the amusement tax. If the tax straightens out this particular form of imposition the paying public will regard it as well worth the expense.

Many Flume citizens will wonder whether when D'Annunzio left that part of the map he took most of the town with him.

Coal profiteering suggests as much underground work as the process of mining itself.

Telephone Matters.
Only a few years ago, relatively, telephone service in the District comprised such a small number of subscribers that all were served through one exchange. A phone had merely a number, which sufficed in the calling. Then came more phone use, with a multiplication of calls, and a branch station was set up, called "North," the central portion of the city becoming "Main." Quickly thereafter more exchanges were established, until the nomenclature of telephony became extensive. There were added "Columbia," and "Lincoln," and "West," and "Cleveland," and finally "Pennsylvania," for the subdivision of the central portion.

New another exchange is announced, to be put in service next week. This will be called "Adams," and will comprise a large residential area, in subdivision of one of the northern exchanges. That will make eight different concentrations of lines within the city.

The branch exchange is a material convenience to both phone user and company. It permits a more equal bearing of the burden of the traffic. A great many phone calls are within the range of an exchange, and these have a better chance for immediate connection than if they had to pass through the central switchboard. As a subdivision becomes congested, as in the case of "Columbia," now about

to be relieved by "Adams," it must be again separated into units for the care of the maximum number of immediate calls. The problem for the telephone company to solve is the determination of just how far this process can continue.

While complaints of telephone service are chronic, they are not justified during recent months. While the war-time congestion prevailed here the phone system became greatly overtaxed. The government's use of the wires multiplied many times, and there was little chance to enlarge the equipment. Now the service is normal again and despite occasional "wrong numbers"—which may be due to poor calling by the phone users—and broken connections it may be said that Washington enjoys an exceptionally speedy and courteous response to its calls.

In this connection it may be suggested that the change in the style of the telephone book, placing the numbers at the end of the line instead of at the beginning, is not at present satisfactory to the majority of phone users. Continued use for the period of the edition, however, may prove that this is the better way. It is worth trying out.

Trusts or Boycotts?
As a reaction from the decision of the Supreme Court last Monday to the effect that under the anti-trust statutes labor unions are enjoined from engaging in secondary boycotts, a movement has been started for the repeal of those laws. Heretofore organized labor has regarded the anti-trust enactments prohibiting certain trade restraints on the part of capital as good and wholesome for the economic health of the country. Now that the highest court has held that they apply to all, without discrimination, they are anathema.

This is not an unfamiliar spectacle. It makes all the difference in the world whose ox is gored. There is no law that pleases everybody. In the case of the Sherman and Clayton acts, the latter of which supposedly prevented the former specifically from checking the boycott enterprise of the labor unions, the trusts themselves, or the business elements making truss possible, have been always stoutly hostile. But they have yielded, with rather bad grace, and with much appealing to the courts and endeavor to delay and thwart the operation of the law, and though by subterfuge and device they have in some cases managed to evade the strict provisions against price-fixing, product-controlling combinations, they have generally accepted the decree. As long as the statutes were held to be inoperative against the labor combinations they were rated as good laws. Now that by decision of the court they are ruled to be operative to prohibit all forms of trade restraint, whether by capital or by labor, they are declared to be bad laws, and the demand is voiced for their repeal.

Can a law be framed which will satisfy the needs of the public in respect to the regulation of the trusts and at the same time permit groups of people to combine and seek the destruction of business? Is there any essential difference between the organization of a trust that drives small producers and dealers out of the trade field and the organization of a labor boycott that aims at the closing of markets to an employer? The Supreme Court has said that there is no difference, under the statutes as written.

If organized labor believes that it should have the right to boycott it must consent to the repeal of the prohibition against trust trade combinations. But will the people generally consent? The "third party" to the trade relationship, the consumer, may demand a hearing, and though unauthorized he may have to be heeded, because he is the overwhelming majority in this, as in any other country.

Wagnerian opera is being successfully performed in Paris. Germany's intelligence has always been better represented by its musicians and poets than by its politicians.

Senator Borah's attitude on armament and the inauguration is in the nature of consistent effort to limit both human fighting and human rejoicing.

Forgery of labels, permits and the like tend to make the exterior of the bottle as much an object of suspicion as the interior.

Action on the Forestry Problem.
The forest resources of the United States are being consumed much faster than they are being replaced. Grasp that fact and its significance, whether you are a plain citizen or a member of Congress representing some thousands of plain citizens. And when the fact has been grasped and the cold figures in the case have been digested get down to the business of insisting that this condition of affairs, with its obvious menace to the industrial progress of the nation, shall be changed. For it can be changed. The only thing that is needed to make the fact read, "The forest resources of the United States are being replaced faster than they are being consumed," is action. The action of the private citizen need only be to pick out the congressman best known at the Capitol and impress him with the facts which are felt. His action, as one directly responsible for any continuation of the existing state of affairs, need merely be to see that some bill which will blot out the unfavorable difference between consumption and distribution becomes a law in the immediate future.

The situation is all wrong today. But it may readily be righted tomorrow, if, awaking to the gravity of a condition of affairs which assures us, in words of one syllable, that men need wood, yet that in a few years there will be no wood in our land if we do not end waste and plant new trees, the nation will stop whispering, "Too bad—such a menacing situation," and enter a demand, in precise and audible terms, for remedial action.

There is a measure before Congress, under the title of the Snell forestry bill which, if made a law, would be

a long step in the right direction. It may well be that, aroused to an appreciation of the indicated menace, Congress will see the expediency of making the step even longer, of appropriating more than four million dollars for work contemplated under the bill during the coming fiscal year. Several times that sum would be none too much to make an effective start, in co-operation with the states, in rehabilitating one of the most important of American resources. But whether final action when taken is to be on the Snell bill as drafted, or on some measure of larger scope and more generous appropriations, let us have action, and that soon.

Public Records in Danger.
The burning of the state capital of West Virginia at Charleston, with practically all of the official records of the commonwealth, is a warning to Congress to spare no funds for the early construction of fire-resisting if not completely fireproof archives storage quarters here and the replacement at the earliest practical time of the fire-inviting buildings that now house some of the government offices. It is notorious that some of these public structures are veritable fire traps. They were built long before the development of fire-resisting materials and construction methods. They were designed solely for utility and not for security. They are now not only congested with clerks, but stuffed with furniture and papers. In some of them modern steel filing cases have been installed. In others tinderlike shelving remains in use.

No matter how substantial and fireproof an archives building may be constructed for the care of the permanent records of the government, there will remain thousands of tons of documentary material on file in the public offices that cannot be transferred to a central storage point. These are the current files that must be kept at hand for ready reference. Their destruction would throw the government into chaos and entail enormous loss.

There should not be a single wooden filing case or exposed document container in the entire government service. Every item of fire risk should be reduced to the minimum. The United States carries no insurance. In fact, it could not be insured against the loss that is possible in a blaze in any one of the public offices. No money could replace the records that are hourly exposed to destruction there.

A general spirit of confidence is manifest regarding the year 1921. America has abandoned no principles and sacrificed no ideals as a result of the years of world trial, and is ready to take up progress in her appointed lines without loss of enthusiasm.

Economies which involve dropping employees of the government always raise serious doubts as to whether the service lost is not worth much more than the money gained.

California may yet see her way clear to quit worrying about any Japanese questions and leave them to Canada and Australia.

A metropolitan society publication has been sued for libel. A discreet society publication confines itself strictly to the politest of untruths.

Food prices are reported to be going down, but some of the menu cards are reluctant about printing the news.

Every patriotic citizen hopes there will be no opportunity for umbrella speculators next 4th of March.

Some of the Germans are inviting the ex-kaiser to return to Berlin. Others are daring him.

SHOOTING STARS.
BY PHILANDER JOHNSON.

Everyday Mysteries.
"This much I do not understand," Said H Ezekiah Bings.
"I don't know why a friendly hand Unto another clings
With such a sense of coo'dence
When things are going wrong,
And makes the universe immense
A realm of smiles and song.
"I don't know why the roses bloom,
Nor why the snowflakes fall;
Nor why the stars dispel the gloom—
And yet I love them all.
And life, though wisdom's way is grand,
Seems sweetest for the hings
I cannot hope to understand."
Said H Ezekiah Bings.

Self-Consciousness.
"What is your idea of a true statesman?" asked the scribe.
"Young man," rejoined Senator Sorghum, "I am willing to give you an interview, but I haven't time for a full biography."

Jud Tunkins says his automobile unexpectedly quits work and demands more money, the same as if it had human intelligence.

January Sunshine.
The climate makes a general hit. The future would be far more gay if we could only bottle it.
For next inauguration day.

The Egotist.
"I understand you have barred Three Finger Sam from the poker game."
"Yes," answered Cactus Joe, "for his egotism."
"How do you mean, 'egotism'?"
"He got an idea he had some kind of a divine right that prevented anybody from ever holdin' four aces except himself."

Saving His Energy.
"So you are for prohibition?"
"I am," replied Uncle Bill Bottletop.
"For what reason?"
"The simple reason that there isn't any more use of arguing about it."

Editorial Digest

"Industrial Court" on Trial Again.

The recent decision of the Kansas industrial court, once more plunged into publicity in the controversy against the millers who were accused of closing down their plants in order to force up the price of flour, has this time brought forth more untoward comment from the press than it did last spring, when it decided that the coal miners had no right to strike while the public shivered. The statement of the court that "essential industrial workers" are entitled to a minimum of "skilled and faithful employees" on the pay roll in slack seasons as well as normal seasons met with a storm of criticism. On the other hand, the fact that the millers' case was dismissed aroused scathing comment from other quarters.

A number of newspapers are uncertain as to what the significance of the court action is. Among them is the Bridgeport Telegram (independent), which admits it is difficult to tell whether the Kansas body is making "economic history" or "economic nonsense."

From Kansas itself comes the opinion, expressed in the Wichita Beacon (independent), that the decision was "wholesome," and an added footnote that it is wrong for critics to assume that "the court may arbitrarily compel a mill to run"; its powers are simply the "broad and simple police powers of government," and are not applied "except where the public is endangered." To the Springfield Republican (independent) it is not as broad and simple as it may seem. Suppose a firm were made insolvent by "strict application of the principle of the faithful and efficient worker's right to employment," it suggests, then, "Would the state view the fall complacently as the failure of the unit to survive, or would it prepare itself to assume the conduct of the industry as a public obligation?"

The New York Globe (independent) also doubts that the court can force upon employers the responsibility of providing for workmen under all conditions, though it shows how it was free to judge labor without check.

The Wheeling Intelligencer (republican) considers suggesting that certain employees be kept on pay rolls in slack time is nothing startling. "It is the usual practice so far as possible, in all occupations," and "it will be observed that the court says that employers 'should do these things and that they must do them.'"

But the Toledo News Bee (independent) says: "Having tried to ensure that the court can force court now proceeds to rivet the shackles on the employer. In both instances it reveals itself poorly grounded in business sense and legal lore."

Without making a direct charge against the state, the Chicago Daily News (independent) implies its weaknesses by asking: "What happens if employers are unable to pay living wages, or indeed any wages, to men laid off temporarily, or to pay full wages to men working only part time? Is the state prepared to subsidize the employers thus circumvented? And why does the law, so benevolent to skilled employees, turn its back on the unskilled employees in the same essential industry? Does not the state of Kansas need unskilled as well as skilled labor, and are not unskilled laborers entitled to a living wage?"

A western labor view of the decision, expressed from a legal standpoint and covering the principle back of the court, is set forth by the San Francisco Labor Clarion, which thinks the idea of the court "is based on bad or immature consideration."

Although reflecting the opposite opinion, the Wall Street Journal (independent) objects to the equity of the decision, declaring that it provides "wages for idleness" and assumes that "capital once committed to a business may not be withdrawn when the business proves unprofitable."

A similar expression comes from the New York Times (independent democrat), although that paper makes it plain that it does not wish "to carp," but merely "to show a warm and lively interest" in this vital and difficult problem with which the Kansans are trying to cope.

But the plan is not without its staunch supporters, who, like the Pittsburgh Leader (progressive republican), believe that "the opinion delivered the other day by the Kansas court of industrial relations will be ranked in legal history with the momentous judicial decisions of the world dealing with human privileges and obligations." The Grand Rapids Herald (republican) is another enthusiast, which declares that, "like the motor car, we shall some day wonder that there was ever a time when the Kansas idea didn't everywhere exist and function."

War Finance to the Rescue.

Congress has overruled the President's War Finance Corporation veto with so emphatic and sweeping a vote that the action speaks for itself. It remains to consider the result of the revival of that body's functions. If all that the revived corporation did were to fork over millions of cash or credit to farmers the plan surely would fail. Wadding up the banks with farmers' loans of such a thing were practical, or wadding up the United States Treasury itself with farmers' loans, if such a thing were possible, never could sell the farmers' crops at higher prices if there were no market demand for them. Creating the necessary market demand for the crops is a horse of another color.

Enabling general American industry to finance export sales, on the other hand, does not mean merely more exports of wheat or corn or cotton. It means more exports of anything and everything needed abroad. These exports mean American mills and factories kept busy instead of being compelled to put up the shutters.

The American farmer might not export a single bushel of wheat and yet get a better market in his own country because of the increased exports of manufacturers. He might not borrow a single dollar more and yet work out his safety, not by bringing back his crop while interest on his heavy loans piled up against him, but, on the contrary, by sending it to market to meet the stimulated demand for it.—New York Herald (independent).

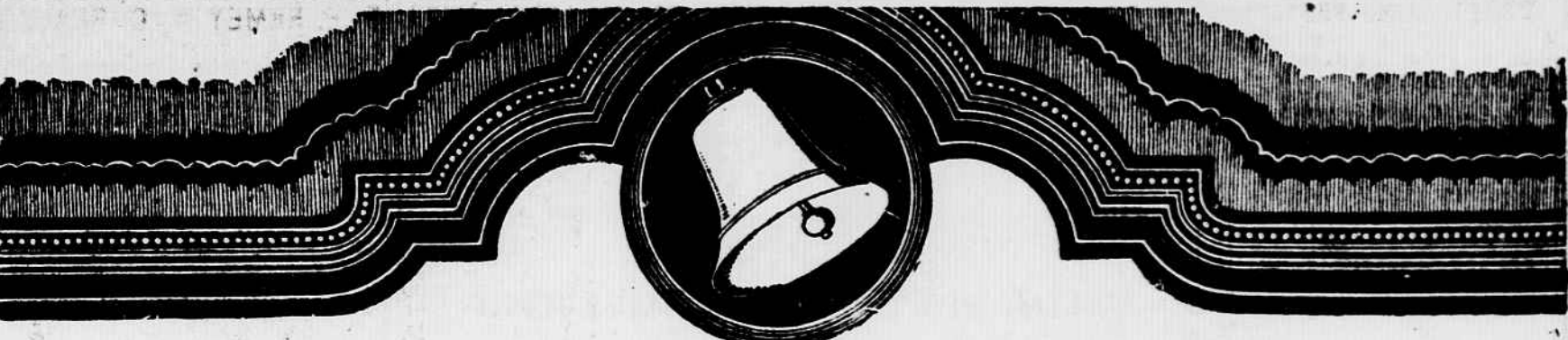
A Helping Hand to Cuba.

President Wilson's assignment of Gen. Crowder to Cuba as an adviser on behalf of our government to the president and government of Cuba in its present economic and political troubles will be the first intimation for many persons in this country that conditions in the island republic are such as to threaten paternal intervention on the part of the United States. Any sort of interference with the internal affairs of Cuba is to be deprecated, even though by the terms under which Cuba was turned over to its own people the government of the United States reserved the right and the duty to intervene to protect the independence of the republic and to maintain the stability of its political and economic administration. Once since the independence of Cuba that intervention was necessary. In the present instance it is sincerely to be hoped that counsel and advice will be all that is necessary to smooth out the political difficulties that followed the recent presidential election. For it is believed that with the election finally settled, the acute economic troubles under which Cuba is suffering will cure themselves. The President has made a wise selection in Gen. Crowder, who knows Cuba intimately, and has the confidence of its people.—Philadelphia Public Ledger (independent).

A Topeka man says: "If there isn't any hell, then where has business gone?"—Denver Times.

When age she starts to re-vamp.—Lexington Leader.

A man should not buy an airplane until he is sure of its upkeep.—Louisville Post.



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